



Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts

above. beyond.

November 10, 2016

Commissioner Jay Dardenne
Division of Administration
PO Box 940195
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9095

RE: Report pursuant to HCR 25

Dear Commissioner Dardenne:

This letter serves as the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (LSMSA) report to the Task Force on Structural Changes in Budget and Tax Policy, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 25 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana State Legislature.

LSMSA's mission is to foster in high-achieving, highly-motivated young scholars lifelong growth toward reaching individual potentials and finding places of work and service in a global society through the examination and exchange of ideas in a community of learners. Despite years of state general fund reductions, we continue to strive to provide a rich and vigorous curriculum for the state's best and brightest students. Austerity measures haven't diminished our ability to outperform other state schools in ACT performance (29.2 mean composite score two consecutive years), scholarship awards (\$19.4 million) matriculation (100% college-bound graduates), and retention of a nationally-ranked faculty who all meet college-level credentialing standards.

We continually identify operational efficiencies that will result in cost savings while still maintaining a safe and secure living and learning environment for Louisiana's exceptional students. Considering 80% of our budget now consists of personnel services, we looked to this area for strategic changes in FY17. In order to fulfill our mission to increase enrollment, funding was applied toward an admissions counselor position. To further address and support the unique needs of our young scholars and the need to maintain student retention rates, a personal counselor/student success position was created. A purchasing officer position was eliminated to accommodate the creation of this position. The existing business office staff consolidated their duties to accommodate this elimination.

Beyond personnel services, the school has reduced costs in utilities, education supplies, maintenance, and other operating services.



Commissioner Jay Dardenne

Page 2

It must be noted that any gains in efficiencies that are realized by the school are diminished by increased non-discretionary expenses. All of these expenses are critical to the operation of a residential high school. These increases include employee and retiree medical benefits; food service; telecommunications; state-mandated interagency transfers; and the maintenance of an aging physical plant, equipment, and fleet of vans and school buses.

The Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts will continue to identify additional efficiencies and to manage fund restrictions throughout this fiscal year and beyond. We look forward to working with the administration and the legislature to find avenues to improve the efficiency of services to Louisiana's exceptional high school students.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven G. Horton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steven G. Horton, PhD
Executive Director